The PATH to

QUALITY

IEQ undertaken by:

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Prologue: Defining Quality

I think there is such a thing as quality, but that as soon as you try to define it, something goes haywire. You can't do it.[1]

The definition of quality is particularly elusive in education, where so many individual, home, school, and societal factors converge to determine how a child responds in the classroom. These disparate influences rain down, sometimes helping, sometimes hindering, but constantly changing the quality of education. In such a dynamic setting, understanding quality is a challenge requiring the application of multi-faceted measures and broad minds.

To help developing countries define – and achieve – quality, the Improving Educational Quality Project (IEQ) has relied on collaborative efforts with ministerial, nongovernmental organization, regional, and local educators to make the most of ongoing dialogue, classroom-based research on students' school experiences, and collegial efforts that clarify standards for student performance.

IEQ offers a framework focusing on the progress of students toward standards

Whatever the setting, quality is relative, not absolute. It is a work in progress developed though the dialogue and actions of policymakers and practitioners. To foster this dialogue, IEQ offers a framework focusing on the progress of students toward standards. These, in turn, are built on measurable objectives for knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and socialization. National, regional, and local priorities come into play – as does their lack. IEQ centers on helping developing countries understand the myriad factors and forces that drive and dampen performance and, within this context, to acknowledge real issues, conduct and understand research, apply lessons learned, build professional alliances, and implement desired changes. This is a tall order, but in practice, it is both a definition of – and a means to define – quality.

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[1] Phaedrus' response to his students when they resist his attempt to generate dialogue on quality Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, p. 84

One helpful starting point toward defining quality is observation of what takes place between teacher and pupil. As part of its work supporting educational improvement in developing nations, the IEQ project has documented many learning situations over the years.

One, in rural Malawi, involved a teacher demonstrating long division:

She scratched three problems on an aged chalkboard and instructed her pupils to copy them in their exercise books. These had been tucked away, however, into the plastic bags that serve as mats on the dirt floor. So there was some scrambling to extract the books. After allowing everyone to get situated again, the teacher tiptoed among the children squeezed together on the floor. They worked on the assignment; she leaned on shoulders to keep her balance. Hands waving books flew into the air and the teacher silently marked the pages she could reach and handed them back. There was no time for all the hands to be answered. The teacher completed her circuit and invited three pupils forward to inscribe the assignment, however illegibly, on the worn-out blackboard. This concluded Standard 3 Math. The teacher moved to her "desk" – a stool in the corner where her materials were stacked – to locate her guide for the next class.

There was no time for all the hands to be answered

In this classroom setting – and indeed, in all of them – there are numerous potential points of entry for those who would intervene in the interest of improving quality. Instead of piecemeal, single interventions, it is possible through the IEQ approach to devise a plan that yields sustainable improvements, including:

- professional development programs to upgrade teachers' skills (e.g. student-centered learning) and knowledge about the content they must teach;

- community investment to build a new classroom block of bricks made by the parents, so as to move classes out of the open space covered by a thatched roof held by four poles;

- government policies that require textbooks for almost every pupil;

- measurement of incremental learning by individual pupils (e.g. curriculum-based assessment) as a supplement to end-of-cycle high stakes testing;

- parental support for learning, including the provision of meals at school and time for study at home;

- focused attention on quality by national educators enlightened with stories and empirical evidence about situations such as those described above; and

- demonstrated linkages between locally-based research and knowledge about quality issues.

There are many sojourners on the path to quality. In this document, educators from Jamaica, Ghana, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Slovakia describe their approaches to improving educational quality, in which the resources of the IEQ have been coupled with the devotion of local teachers, policymakers, and parents. It is an important story.

Why IEQ?

10 million more children have been going to school every year

The long anticipated hope for improving the learning opportunities of children in developing countries is gradually being transformed into reality. Ten years have passed since the Jomtien World Conference on Education for All in 1990 called for the focus of basic education to be on "actual learning acquisition and outcome rather than exclusively upon enrollment." This goal was reaffirmed by the April 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, which has reported significantly increased school attendance since Jomtien. The number of children enrolled rose from an estimated 599 million in 1990 to 681 million in 1998, according to UNESCO's report on progress since Jomtien, and this means some 10 million more children have been going to school every year – nearly double the average increase of the preceding decade. Heralded by world leaders in the United Nations and the donor organizations, the concept of Education for All has opened the doors of primary schools to all school age children and has been reinforced by UNICEF's declaration that education is a basic, non-negotiable human right.

With emphasis on the rights of the whole child and all children to survival, protection, development and participation at the center of this international movement, the focus is on learning that strengthens the capacities of children to act progressively on their own behalf.

One by one, national leaders have proclaimed universal access to basic education – Uganda in 1994, Malawi in 1994. Education has shifted in the hearts and minds of parents from a privilege known to others to a right available for their children. The doors "opened" and boys and girls of many ages arrived to claim their rightful place in the classroom.

Education systems have taken "a deep breath" as they struggled to respond to the burgeoning needs of their swollen school populations for learning materials, trained teachers, classroom space, school feeding, and continuous assessment – all inspired by an admirable political shift that came without the funds to support it. Donors' attempts to work with countries intensified in the years after Jomtien and the launch of universal primary education. Together, they strove to improve system efficiency, expand access, strengthen national infrastructures, coordinate more local involvement, and reduce system wastage caused by high dropout rates and class repetition.

Multilateral and bilateral relationships fostered national educational reform efforts toward a range of priorities such as teacher training, improved end-of-cycle assessment, revised curriculum materials, increased in-service training programs, management courses for district and regional educators, and increased textbook production. However, the implementation of strategies such as these fell far short of the needs and expectations required to translate the national policies regarding access into changes that improve teaching and learning.

Education systems have taken a deep breath as they struggled to respond

The graphic on the following page illustrates the wide gap between the quantity of education (universal access) and its quality (e.g. materials, training, measurement), which has been overpowered:

Figure 1: Successful Completion of Primary School
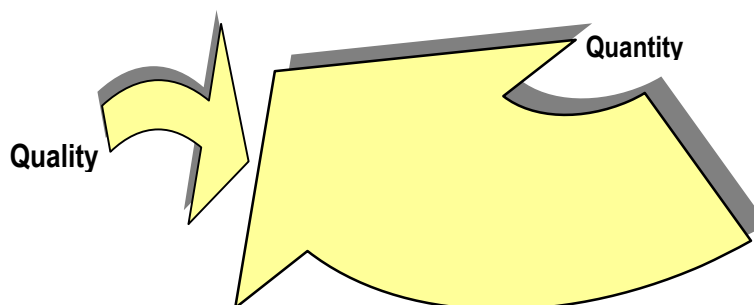
Can they coexist?

To help education systems respond to the wave of new students, the IEQ Project in 1991 launched a context-based research activity linked to the quality of education. The research centers on how countries might strengthen their capacity to systematically examine the local conditions of teaching and learning – and to use the knowledge as the basis for reforming national policy and local practice.

Although the agendas may differ, universal access or "quantity" and "quality" education share a common goal: successful primary school completion for all pupils. Quantity tends to focus on moving pupils through the system, while quality addresses what children know and can do and what happens after primary school. Today, with efforts toward quantity frustrating those toward quality education, questions surrounding the reasons for nonalignment are continually being raised by parents, pupils, community members, employers, educators, national and international researchers and policymakers. Systematic school- and classroom-based research examines the factors that influence the successes in teaching and learning and finds that moves to align the two "forces" are few. Most studies of national reform efforts are short-term rather than longitudinal and do not systematically collect qualitative and quantitative data on teachers and pupils. Yet the need to link research to quality and generate knowledge and understanding is critical if transformational change is to result in social, economic, and national development. Knowledge about the reality of teachers' and pupils' experiences and the environment of schools

and classrooms forms the basis for dialogue about reforms in policy and practice. For it is at the local level where the action takes place; where the changes intended by policies take effect. Yet those who use legislative and regulatory frameworks to guide the changes are seldom exposed to the learning environments where those frameworks are to be implemented. If policymakers were able to enter the classroom and have the experience of learners and teachers, how might their debates and decisions about quality also be transformed?

The type of research supported by IEQ attempts to close the distance between policymakers and others by bringing them "into" the classroom. This is accomplished by presenting the findings in realistic and concrete terms that illuminate learning experiences.

Those who use legislative and regulatory frameworks are seldom exposed to the learning environments

This Prologue to the IEQ case study anthology – *The Path to Quality* – introduces the political and educational context in which this project was launched and briefly describes how IEQ country-based activity developed to reflect national educational reform priorities during the initial five-year contract (1991-1996). The individual chapters, written by our host country colleagues, describe how the IEQ approach was applied to examine issues of quality in individual countries during the second five-year contract (1997-2002). The Epilogue will summarize the maturation of the IEQ approach and frame the outcomes and legacy of IEQ within a broader international and national attention to quality.

Where It All Started

To cope with a changing world, any entity must develop the capability of shifting and changing . . . in short, the capability of learning.[2]

In 1990, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) continued its commitment to assist developing nations in strengthening the path to economic and social development through education by launching the Improving Educational Quality (IEQ) Project. This initiative demonstrated a recognition that governments and donor agencies must provide support so that countries can take the lead in

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[2] De Gues, 1997, p20 discovered in Fullan 1999.

devoting attention and energy to questions about how to think about and do something about quality of education. Implicit in this overall goal is that the intended beneficiaries of national reform efforts – the pupils – will perform better in school.

Although the IEQ focus was on formal schooling, the shift in the lexicon is now to "learning," recognizing the importance of and the need to support non-formal educational environments. IEQ aimed to illuminate the realities of teachers' and pupils' experiences and the school environment as the basis for dialogue about reforms in practice and policy. IEQ worked within national institutions to strengthen institutional and individual capacity to examine the issue of quality. The first contract required activity in three core countries and through on-site visits and dialogue, three countries launched IEQ – Ghana, Mali, and Guatemala. In addition, IEQ received three buy-ins to this contract, from Uganda, South Africa, and the Africa Bureau (Office of Sustainable Development/Education).

The original stated goals of the IEQ project were to:

IEQ aimed to illuminate the realities of pupils' and teachers' experiences

- Understand how and why each country's classroom-based interventions influence pupil performance;

- Demonstrate a process whereby findings from classroom research on improving educational quality are utilized by the educational system;

- Create opportunities for dialogue and partnerships among researchers and educators seeking to improve educational quality at the local, regional, national and international levels; and

- Maintain a history of the project to document the rationales for choices made, opportunities and constraints encountered, and lessons learned.

Mapping the Landscape of Educational Quality

As revealed in this Prologue, implementing the goals of IEQ in each participating country required a shift from the traditional mode of technical assistance to a collaborative process between the IEQ members based in the U.S. and the national team members who resided in the host countries. The core value of IEQ is that activities are carried out locally by country nationals, with U.S. consultants playing a supportive role (e.g.,

conveying new methods, particularly qualitative; participating in workshops on analyses and user-friendly presentation of findings). IEQ works in a cycle rather than along a linear path, as illustrated by Figure 2, so that actions based on the findings are reevaluated in a new cycle. IEQ goals are integrated into country-based activities through a process whereby local educators and researchers apply action research at the local level and use findings to inform dialogue at the national, regional and local levels. In the international arena, IEQ Exchange among teams from IEQ countries occurs annually at the Comparative & International Education Society (CIES) meetings. Through their association with IEQ, team members meet with other international consultants and national researchers in-country.

There are many partners in the IEQ efforts, including educators and researchers within the host country, who often are employees of a national institution, many with advanced degrees from study in Europe and/or North America. The purpose of housing IEQ within a national institution is not only to strengthen the technical skills and experience of staff members, but to create visibility and sustainability for the institution as a country-based resource that supports national reform efforts through locally-based research. In some instances, IEQ forged new relationships in-country as people accustomed to working as individual researchers joined teams (e.g. university researchers working in teams with other institutions; non-researchers such as local teachers involved in the data collection and dialogue of findings; and researchers actively engaged in forging mechanisms for sharing the findings with potential users). Being a partner ideally means that each team member recognizes and values reciprocity among the team members. Everyone brings technical and/or cultural knowledge to the discussions around the design and implementation of the IEQ activity. Examples of partner institutions include: the Ministry of Bilingual Education (DIGEBI) in Guatemala; the University of Cape Coast, the College of Education at Winneba & the University of Ghana at Legon in Ghana; the Malawi Institute of Education & Save the Children/US – Malawi Field Office in Mangochi in Malawi.

Being a partner ideally means that each team member recognizes and values reciprocity

These principles ensure the local relevance of IEQ activities:

The priorities articulated in the research design reflect some aspect of a national reform

- **The priorities articulated in the research design reflect some aspect of a national reform in each country.** All participants in IEQ are learners and learning must occur in context. This context includes how learning takes place, the coverage of assessment, and the physical environment of the learning experiences and the level and types of support provided by the community. Examples of IEQ classroom-anchored research include: the implementation process and the learning outcomes of a middle-school integrated curriculum for out-of-school learners delivered by audio instruction in Honduras; the implementation of a professional development program in partnership with the government education advisors for new and experienced teachers in Standards 1-5 in one district in Malawi (QUEST); an exploration of how the national policy requiring primary school teachers to use local language as the medium of instruction is actually being implemented; and the design and evaluation of a professional development program for Teacher Training College tutors who are now required to prepare students to teach an integrated primary school curriculum in Jamaica.

- **The pupils are the ultimate beneficiaries (or victims) of legislative frameworks, national reform efforts, administrative schemes and a host of pilot projects.** Do these efforts have the desired effect of enhancing learning – of promoting knowledge, skills and attitudes that are valued by the local community and that contribute to civil society AND result in the successful completion of primary school? Who knows and how is this knowledge measured? The IEQ activities focus on these issues by assessing: instructional practice and teacher content knowledge; a pupil's academic achievement and learning experience; and the physical environment in which learning occurs inside and outside the school. All efforts in the educational enterprise should reach the pupil in some form of improved quality of education.

Assessment is the IEQ entry point. The following graphic illustrates the overall IEQ approach, which complements the above principles – assimilation and analysis of the data follow assessment, which is then followed by action based on the findings. This collaborative process seeks to align learning with the notions of quality, which stakeholders at all levels of the system bring to the dialogue.

Figure 2: The Cycle of Improvement
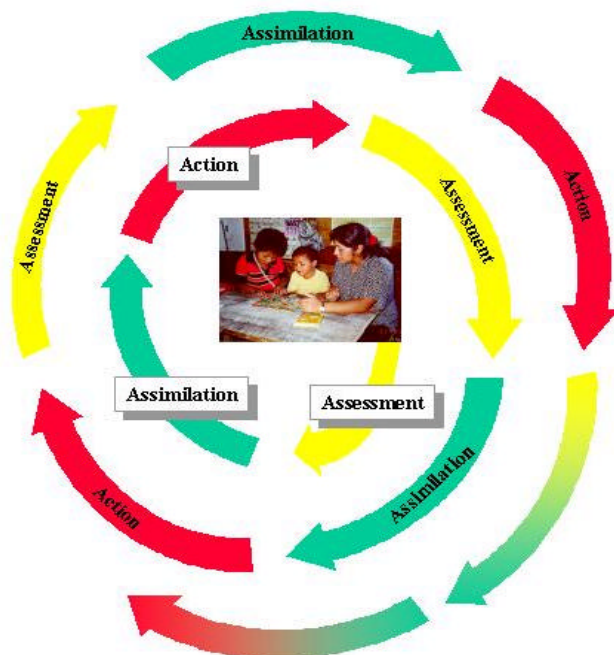
IIR 3/4/96

The approach consists of three elements:

- **Assessment** of teaching and learning, which necessitates a variety of measures to capture diverse perspectives on the school experience and outcomes. Academic achievement may be measured by criterion referenced exams and curriculum-based assessments but enrichment of the knowledge about the quantitative information produced through such measures occurs when one systematically observes the teaching and learning in action – e.g., how are learning resources being used; are pupils working in small groups; is there discussion or interaction between the pupils and/or between pupils and the teacher? Interviews with district, regional and local educators reveal the roles and responsibilities of these officials, along with the credentials they bring to their profession.

- **Assimilation** combines both quantitative procedures (developing and managing large-scale data bases requiring knowledge of SPSS) and qualitative procedures (methods of analyzing open-ended responses or developing classifications from observations) so that the meaning of one is enriched with the other. For example, if pupils' reading scores are low, then the observation that pupils have very little material to read pinpoints opportunities for intervention and correction. Professional development seminars on qualitative methods; data analysis; and presentation of findings

occur in each participating country. Under no circumstances do international partners arrive in a partner country to DO the work. Resource materials are prepared in the local language. Often, an initial analysis may raise issues which require further exploration. For example, in a situation where there was no assurance that a textbook moved from a district administrator to the local school and then to a pupil's home, investigation raised the question, What happens to the textbooks?

- **Action,** or using the research findings, is one measure of the IEQ success, optimally when also guided by professional insights of non-researchers whose ideas based on experiences may not be grounded in research but nonetheless are valid. Utilization occurs in two key ways: the first is sharing the information so as to permit reflection, dialogue and options based on the implications of the findings. Knowledge therefore moves throughout the system as the perspectives obtained from the research are shared with a variety of voices within the system. The traditional methods of disseminating research for users to consume at leisure are fractured as researchers assume responsibility for sharing the knowledge gained in arenas (e.g. national seminars, workshops, briefings) where questions may be asked and potential actions may be debated. Often, additional research questions probe more deeply into the research/ quality issues (e.g., in Malawi, a 50 percent attrition of teachers from the baseline to the six-month follow-up point was an unhappy surprise and caused researchers to return to the schools to learn, "What happened to the teachers?" Another type of action occurs by applying the new knowledge to improve a program practice or to reevaluate and issue new policy. Learning that teachers refuse to release textbooks to pupils because the teachers are held accountable for damage or loss of textbooks produced a change in policy that removed responsibility from the teacher.

The IEQ approach involves continuous efforts to take stock of results

The IEQ process permits flexibility within a dynamic core framework – it recognizes and has the ability to respond to changes which invariably occur within national political systems (as well as USAID), as newly elected and appointed officials view challenges in new ways with adjusted policies and procedures. The IEQ approach involves continuous efforts to take stock of results, because there is always a need to view quality educational improvement through the lenses of the school and the classroom.

How Did IEQ Function in Partner Countries?

IEQ began in 1991 with the award of a five-year contract to the Institute for International Research (now the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to work in three countries, two in sub-Saharan Africa and one in Central America. Following a global announcement to USAID Missions and Bureaus, core team members visited several countries to meet

with local stakeholders, learn about national educational reform efforts, meet potential partner institutions and discuss entry points for the IEQ process. The three countries were Ghana and Mali in Africa and Guatemala in Central America, supported by the core contract. In 1994 and 1995, USAID Missions in Uganda and South Africa funded IEQ activities through buy-ins. In 1996, USAID Mali supplemented the IEQ core activity with a buy-in to develop pupil performance measures in two local languages. In 1997, AIR received a second five-year contract to continue and expand the work of the initial five years. More educational reform efforts have now recognized and included "quality" as a priority. The existing contract is an Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC) and activities are funded by USAID Missions and Bureaus.

More educational reform efforts have now recognized and included "quality" as a priority

Bureaus and Missions began and concluded activities as their needs required. These activities unfolded in each country amidst political changes, the implementation of new national reform efforts, and newly formed relationships among colleagues from institutions within-country and internationally. It was truly a learning community. The defining characteristics and implementation experiences reflected the IEQ principles and chronicled the IEQ story during the first contract. They formed the foundation for the more expanded IEQ described in the country-by-country chapters of this anthology.

LAUNCHING AN IEQ ACTIVITY

IEQ begins by identifying national resources, including a national institution to host and house the activity; a national research team led by a national coordinator; and a national educational reform effort with a policy framework hospitable to building a knowledge base about the local implementation of the national effort. The cornerstone of the immediate IEQ activity, this set of existing resources also serves as the foundation for integrating this process as a *new* national resource.

Affiliation with a national institution took several forms. In Ghana, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Coast made an early commitment to establish an office (the Center for Research on Primary Education in Ghana), which was refurbished by the University for this activity and provide in-kind support. The office remained open and staff applied the skills acquired with IEQ to work with other national educational

projects following the end of the first activity. During the second contract, university participation broadened to include the University of Ghana at Legon and the College of Education at Winneba.   Faculty members within the institutions constituted the research teams.   In Guatemala and South Africa, IEQ recruited local individuals to lead and staff the IEQ activity in an office opened for this purpose. Two Malian institutions hosted IEQ – ISFRA (a parastatal government agency) and IPN (the evaluation department of the Ministry of Education). In each case, members of the professional staff served as IEQ team members. The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) hosted both the first and second IEQ activity, including the provision of space and two UNEB staff members. One provided research guidance and one provided administrative support. Other team members were selected following an open competition and they represented other national institutions in Uganda.

CHOOSING AN ENTRY POINT AROUND "QUALITY"

One of the special characteristics about IEQ is the *absence* of a "project" imported to a partner country.   The issues to be addressed, the design, instrumentation, data collection, analysis and reporting were a collaborative activity between IEQ core staff and host country research team members.   This was a new experience for all, leading to lively debates about the meaning of quality, choices about the potential value and utility of research anchored in the schools and classrooms, methodological approaches (i.e. qualitative or quantitative), sources of information, and constraints.   A commonly asked question is, "How do you define quality?" The IEQ approach dictates that the *context* guides the articulation of quality and for us, the focus of the country-based research. Discussions often blur between conceptual clarity of quality and the strategies required to improve teaching and learning.

One of the special characteristics of IEQ is the absence *of a "project" imported to a partner country*

IEQ decisions about addressing quality lean toward the "strategies" side because IEQ focused on the "processes" to improve teaching and learning rather than the "input" side.   In order to determine the extent to which specific strategies/processes/interventions/reforms are reaching their goals of improving teaching and learning, assessment is integrated into the IEQ approach from the beginning (rather than at the end of an intervention) and throughout the process. Feedback mechanisms that facilitate dialogue about the findings at all points within the education

system (i.e. programme developers and policymakers and programme implementors and parents) thereby permit corrective action to continue in the direction of improved teaching and learning. Assessment is intrinsic to the IEQ approach and viewed as empowering, as compared with the more traditional deficit models. This intrinsic characteristic also feeds the ongoing dialogue on quality – a dynamic whose work is never complete.

Assessment is intrinsic to the IEQ approach and viewed as empowering

Within this perspective on "defining quality," each of the partner countries began with a concrete piece of the national reform effort. In-depth examination at the classroom level was undertaken to illuminate how the reform was being implemented and to build a knowledge base about the factors that contributed to or impeded improved teaching and learning. The focus of each country during the initial five years is detailed in its chapter.

Reflections at the Close of the First Five Years

Before we turn to the recent work of the IEQ countries, it is appropriate to revisit the first five-year stage of IEQ.

It is common and desirable practice at the conclusion of critical efforts to offer some reflections upon completion. The term typically applied to this exercise is "lessons learned." The implication is that a lesson offers instruction through which some knowledge or wisdom is gained. The learning implies application of this new knowledge in another context. The hope is that these lessons will either be a building block for new work by ourselves or others or that they will provide warnings of what not do in order to prevent future errors. We all believe that it should not be necessary to reinvent the wheel. The extent to which we fulfill this belief is a topic for another discussion!

Here is a summary of reflections from IEQ I – lessons learned – that helped the project refine its efforts for the second five year period:

Learning lessons is an ongoing process, which must be integrated into the design and implementation of the activity.

IEQ strives to be a learning community. We included several modes of "self-assessment," such as quarterly documentation of the

progress of IEQ implementation within each of the major four goals – and by country. Another step was to reserve time during each on-site visit for a reflection with the team. As described above, sharing the findings following each data collection effort may have resulted in a shift of the technical direction of an activity (e.g. Ghana). A third technique was to hold bi-weekly telephone conference calls with the USA based core team members and the international consultants who served "long-term" with IEQ activities. This enabled us to employ several mechanisms for keeping in touch with the activities in-country, brainstorming ideas, working together to address issues or challenges and plan together. The substantive developments emerged in written reports, dialogue with team members on-site, and by phone and in the IEQ Exchanges, which occurred annually around the meetings of the Comparative and International Education Society meetings. We also held a final IEQ Exchange in Washington during the final month of the first five years.

Shifting from a relationship based on technical support to technical partnership with host country colleagues requires "letting go" and "taking on."

The IEQ story reveals a deliberate shift from technical support to partnership and ownership

The IEQ story reveals a deliberate shift from technical support to partnership and ownership. It requires a commitment to membership in a learning community, recognition and acceptance that no team member has a monopoly on knowledge. Each team member IS a team member because of the skills, experiences, and perspectives he or she brings to the activity. The collaborative process required "vigilance" by all – it required time and patience and well-developed listening skills. We attempted to create a new climate for working with colleagues in host countries – many who attended the same schools, studied similar curricula, attained similar advanced degrees – but whose professional experience may have been constrained by infrequent opportunities to interact with human resources and obtain technical materials (the Internet was not fully utilized). The international consultants, in many cases, had limited opportunities to know and experience the cultural conditions and knowledge of the national systems of the IEQ countries. All of us had to "let go" of some things and assume responsibility for others.

The tone of reciprocity among colleagues was essential to ensuring that IEQ reflected national country priorities and strengthened national

capacity within individuals and institutions to conduct the activity. This did not occur immediately! It required time, effort, and commitment to develop trust and build new relationships. Moreover, it was necessary to recognize that mistakes happen and can be transformed into learning experiences. It is often more efficient to tell people what to do and how to do it than to facilitate the learning. But that sort of non-interactive approach does not foster development – and is not IEQ.

Research supported, discussed and used by" non-researchers" is a tool for sharing the agenda to improve educational quality.

> *It was necessary to recognize that mistakes happen – and can be transformed into learning experiences*

As a measure of success, IEQ pays close attention to the utilization of knowledge emerging from the research, which then functions as a tool for policy decisions and program development. The findings are presented and shared in user friendly formats and environments among people typically not involved in such reflections – teachers, parents, pupils, district inspectors, as well as the people typically informed, those in policy positions at ministries of education.

Two important factors are at play. The first is *who* participates in the dialogue. IEQ shares information across hierarchal lines within the system, which moves toward a "democratic" process. IEQ has broken through barriers which traditionally isolate educators (often the disenfranchised) by inviting them to the table through conferences, workshops, and community meetings. One example is to share the knowledge, with teachers, about what pupils could and could not do in classrooms (e.g., follow simple instructions, write names, read from "below grade" text). Discussions then focused on how teachers could improve their teaching by pinpointing learning needs and suggesting methods to address those needs. Teachers became more engaged with their teaching and, for some, the absentee rate declined. The second factor is *what* is being discussed. The focus is on what happens in the classroom – teachers don't know how to use textbooks, textbooks aren't given to pupils, there is a high mobility rate of pupils, disconnects exist between the language of pupils and the language of instruction. As a consequence of *reflection* about these

conditions, teachers, trainers and others gain insight into opportunities for improvement.[3]

Providing connections between national colleagues and the international community showcases the skills and experiences of national colleagues and provides opportunities for direct networking.

This has been a most exciting outcome for IEQ. Opportunities for participants to travel within country and internationally, to *be on the agenda* of international conferences, to interact with IEQ colleagues from other countries, to represent their own work, and to build their own networks has been a very affirming personal and professional experience. The conference IEQ focuses on is the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) where IEQ has been represented annually since 1992. Each CIES meeting has been followed by an IEQ Exchange of member countries, through which participants learn about one another's activities and in some cases, observe the activities in other countries. Many IEQ team members have moved "outside" their professional circles to participate in IEQ – e.g. university faculty – to become engaged in basic education. It has been a transforming experience for many and has led to shifts in career direction.

Establishing an institutional home within partner countries is a solid starting point for integrating and/or sustaining capacity strengthened during IEQ.

Success may be measured by continued application of the principles to new situations

This does not mean sustainability of the project! Rather, housing IEQ within a local institution builds not only new individual professional skills, but strengthens the institution. The goal is not to sustain the project by replicating it following donor support, but to ensure the ongoing application of ideas, skills and methodologies to national needs. A project does not need to be "sustained" in order to be successful. Success may be measured by continued application of the principles to new situations. We view IEQ as a process to be integrated into the way research is conducted.

IEQ residence in an institutional home provides a mechanism for broader application of the process. It also provides currency for

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[3] I am struck by the untapped potential for educational improvement throughout the communities and educational system.

acceptance of the process through the nationally recognized institution. Partner institutions in IEQ include universities (i.e. University of Cape Coast); national agencies (i.e. Uganda National Education Board); and intragovernmental departments (i.e. Institut Pedagogie Nationale).

With this panoramic view of the early days of IEQ as a backdrop, our case studies will sharpen the focus and bring into clear relief several particular national challenges in improving educational quality.

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The IEQ Family

Central & Latin America & the Caribbean

USAID
Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean,
Office of Regional and Sustainable Development,
Education and Human Resources
USAID/El Salvador
USAID/Guatemala
USAID/Haiti
USAID/Honduras
USAID/Jamaica

El Salvador
Fundación Salvadoreño de Salude Desarollo
(FUSAL)

Guatemala
Directorate of Bilingual Education (DIGEBI)
Asociación de Investigadores Mayas de Guatemala (AIMAGUA)

Haiti
Fondation Haïtienne de l'Enseignment Privé (FONHEP)

Honduras
EDUCATODOS

Jamaica
Joint Board of Teacher Educators (JBTE)

Europe & Eurasia

USAID
Bureau for Europe and Eurasia
USAID/Bulgaria
USAID/Kyrgyzstan
USAID/Romania
USAID/Slovakia
USAID/Ukraine

Global

USAID's Global Bureau, Center for Human Capacity Development
Global Information Networks in Education (GINIE)—University of Pittsburgh

Africa

USAID
Bureau for Africa, Office of Sustainable Development, Division of Human Resources and Democracy, Education
USAID/Ghana
USAID/Guinea
USAID/Malawi
USAID/Mali
USAID/South Africa
USAID/Uganda
USAID/Zambia

Ghana
University of Cape Coast (UCC)
University of Ghana—Legon
University College of Education of Winneba
Ghana Education Service (GES)

Malawi
Malawi Institute of Education (MIE)
Save the Children/US

Mali
*Institut Pédagogique National
(PIN)
Institut Supérieur de Formation
et de Recherche Appliquée
(ISFRA)*

Uganda
*Uganda National
Examinations Board
(UNEB)*

May 31, 2001